entertained by his elder comrades. No women are permitted to wit- 884
ness this event. After this recognition the young man is free to court the local girls and participate in the events reserved for grown men.

Before her marriage, the Magyar girl customarily lives chastely, 831
and her virginity is believed to give her magic powers which are employed in several superstitious practices. Many customs and especial- 583
ly the terminology connected with marriage go back to the period of Magyar life when rape or bride-purchase was common. The girl of marriageable age is still today referred to as the 'girl for sale' (eladó lány), and the root vesz 'to take, to buy' also denotes 'to marry.' Among the marriage customs, the church or the civil wedding 585
is only part of the entire ceremonial. The most significant popular ceremony features the solemn knotting of the bride's hair and the placing of the fokötő, the shawl covering the head, by the women of the family she is about to enter. The marriage ceremonies, of course, feature the wedding feast with village-wide rejoicing. The ceremonial slaughter of domestic animals (a cockerel with the Palóc) for this feast is reminiscent of former animal sacrifices.

The mother delivers her child lying either in bed or, in some 000

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Girl markets

443 583 Marriegeable girls — in a literal translation from the Hungarian «girls for sale» — were always plentiful in Hungary, and there is no lack of them at present either. There have always been girl markets, and there still are to-day, although one Hungarian man could only buy one girl, even in ancient times, at least according to the rules and laws which prevailed in those days. In speaking of girl markets, we naturally do not think of genteel balls and other social gatherings and opportunities of meeting people; but of the markets and fairs where the common people had a chance of getting acquainted and where in olden days the purchase of a woman was made as quickly as that of any other desirable object.

443 583 563 Especially in those parts of pre-Trianon Hungary which were inhabited by different nationalities there have been, and perhaps still are, well known girl markets. After the devastations of the Mongol raid and the Turkish occupation, Southern Slavs and Roumanians poured into Hungary from the Balkans and Ruthenians came in from [361] Galicia. These newcomers mostly settled in families on cleared patches of forest land, and down to our own days they hardly ever formed real villages. This was especially the case with Ruthenians and the Vlachs. The inhabitants of these scattered settlements hardly ever came into touch with each other; at the best of times just the 443 583 nearest neighbours knew one another. Once or twice a year they gathered to exchange goods and therefore arranged a market. These markets were also opportunities for getting acquainted. The «popa» (their priest) was also near at hand and the lad who, besides the many attrac-

443 583 tive goods in the market, also found a pleasing girl, had not far to go for a holy man who would tighten his rosary and give them his blessing.

An Alpine group of the Transylvanian Vlachs, called «Móc», held once a year, at the beginning of the summer, a market of this kind on top of a mountain called Gaina. The «Móc» lad asked the girl whom he thought attractive whether her Alpine horn was for sale; if she answered that this was so, their agreement was made! In the country of the Ruthenians, who lived under similar conditions, a girl market was held three times a year at Krasznibrod. Here the matter was settled even more rapidly. If the lad was attracted by a girl, he rushed up to her with the cry:

Pod do popa
kdi ti treba hlopa

and literally dragged her away. Not home though, but to the «popa» of the nearest monastery, where the priest immediately legalized this mild form of kidnapping. The Serbs, who had settled in the Southern parts of Hungary which the Turks had badly devastated, had a well known girl market in Zombor in October. Here the lads and the girls formed a large circle for the Kolo dance; a few pipers were hard at work in the middle, and relatives of the lads also stood in the centre. After a careful inspection the parents offered the girl of their choice an apple with a silver coin in it. If the girl accepted the apple, the engagement was made.

We mention the girl markets of Hungary, though they were not Hungarian in the sense that the people taking part in them were Hungarian. In very ancient times Hungarian girl markets must have existed, and in these probably very similar customs were fashionable, these however have not been preserved for us. In some parts the authorities stopped these gatherings, for instance the girl market of

443 Krasznibrod has already been prohibited in the 18th century.
583 The name is practically all that has survived of the Hungarian girl markets, which to-day are, in reality, simple markets or fairs.

The memory of a Szekler girl market, which used to be accompanied by the ringing of angel bells, is still alive. The sound of the bells alone was angelic, the people who rang them were far from being snow white angels: they were black faced gipsies, who held a bell and cattle-bell market in the same place on the same day. Of course with the bells the gipsies also brought their violins and their pipes, so there was music and naturally fights as well, since no market or fair could be imagined without them. The authorities stopped this market too.

In olden times a Hungarian market lasted several days, sometimes quite two weeks, and the Sundays were called the «girl market days», as on those days everyone had time to go to the market; and go they did, especially the young people: the day never passed without dancing and amusements. There are certain Hungarian markets which in memory of old customs are called girl markets to this day.

443 Hungarian markets are generally counted as holidays.
527 Those who go to the market, dress in their most beautiful clothes, and in some places the mothers carry a whole wardrobe for their marrigeable daughters. The girls change several times a day, as a Matyó bride does at every new tune. At almost every Hungarian market there is a chophouse and an arbour, there is feasting, music, dancing and naturally acquaintances are made. Thus more or less every market, even every fair is at the same time a girl market.

443 In summer time the great cart camp of a market or a fair is a very interesting sight. The multitude of buyers and sellers or fair visitors spend their nights there, as the markets or the fairs last several days. Varied national costumes

584 The thorough inspection of house and farm is followed by a meal which is meant to give an occasion to the girl and her parents to express their opinion. If they accept a meal and the girl partakes of it, then they are pleased with their visit; but if they do not eat, or if the girl does not touch food and drink, that means that they have come to the conclusion that the boy's house, farm, or family is not considered a setting good enough for them.

583 It is significant that the Hungarian word for the bridegroom, *vőlegény*, literally means "buying man", and that for a marriageable girl, *eladó lány*, "girl for sale". The survival of these names is more than a mere relic, and the formal engagement is today, as always in the past, preceded by the colourful scene of the ancient "buying-selling" agreement. This agreement, which might be oral or written, defines the "buying-price" and stipulates the rights of the future wife, among others the so-called widow rights, that is, her title to board and lodging in case she survives her husband or if there is no issue of the marriage. The price of the girl is nowadays money and clothes, the amount of which depend on local custom, the financial standing of the boy, and the importance and the desirability of the girl's family. The girl's dowry, which usually balances her "selling-price", consists of a chest of clothes, linen and bedding, all of which together is called the girl's "bed". The deliberations, every phase of which is strictly fixed by custom, take place in dead earnest, and only when every point is duly settled do the parties sit down to the festive meal prepared for the occasion. On the evening following the buying-agreement, the boy and his best man call again to go through the ceremony of formal engagement, which is known as the "handshake", because that is the form it takes between

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the bride and groom. During the handshake or immediately after, the boy hands to the girl a gold or a polished silver coin often stuck into a red apple, and therewith the "buy", that is, the engagement, is concluded. The girl reciprocates with a finely embroidered handkerchief, the "token kerchief", and a tiny bouquet called the "engagement bouquet" to be worn by the boy on his hat until the day of the wedding. The best man then blesses the engaged couple and expresses his opinion that the boy should be entitled hereafter to call freely to see his fiancée. Then all present drink to the happy outcome of the engagement ; this is called the "blessing of the deal", after which the groom and his best man take leave, but not before the girl has presented her fiancé with a silver coin and the best man with a kerchief or scarf offered on a plate. During the engagement the groom is allowed to visit his fiancée regularly, and custom demands that he should call at least once a day. During this time the girl sews and embroiders the splendid engagement shirt that the boy will wear on the day of their wedding. The shirt is made of material spun and woven by the bride herself.

On the Sunday before the wedding-day the selection of assistants, best man, and bridesmaids takes place. In some parts the best man and the witnesses are chosen outside the family because of their clever versification, which stands them in good stead at every turn, their glib-tongued wit, and their popularity ; in others they are regularly chosen from within the family, as are usually all the bridesmaids.

The marriage itself takes place usually on a Wednesday, a day, according to popular belief, well suited for a happy start. The invitations to the wedding and to the ensuing banquet are effected with the aid of a number of special assistants. These "inviters", dressed in their